

Narrator:

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Since the first atomic bombs exploded in 1945, some have tried to rid the world of nuclear weapons. President Obama has embraced this goal with new vigor. America.gov's eJournal USA examines the challenges to achieving nuclear disarmament. The publication features interviews and commentary from former U.S. National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher, and other top thinkers on the nuclear arms issue. Visit us online at www.america.gov to read the latest eJournal USA – A World Free of Nuclear Weapons.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, is strongest as an alliance when it is united by common purposes and common principles. In a speech February 22nd at the National Defense University, before the opening of a daylong seminar on a new strategic vision for the alliance, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said NATO faces a new strategic landscape, new technologies and new adversaries. NATO also faces new ideologies that threaten its security across the globe, not just within its traditional trans-Atlantic boundaries, she said.

NATO must consolidate the gains that have been made since the alliance was founded April 4th, 1949, but also must confront the new nature and origins of the threats it faces today, Clinton said. One of the most complex issues the alliance was beginning to face at the end of the 20th century was operations outside its traditional geographic boundaries.

Some of those operations include NATO ships combating maritime piracy off the Horn of Africa, providing military training to 14,000 Iraqi army troops and supporting the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

Since 1999, NATO has begun conducting military operations well beyond its traditional European boundaries, such as in Afghanistan. This has been the subject of considerable debate within the alliance. In response, NATO has embarked on a series of seminars that are intended to help craft a new strategic concept for the 28-nation alliance. The strategic concept is the core NATO document that defines the trans-Atlantic alliance on its roles, missions, capabilities and strategy for managing security challenges in the 21st century. Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is leading a 12-member group of international experts to revise the strategic concept, which was last revised in 1999.

One area that has created some tension between NATO and the European Union has been security cooperation. Clinton said that in the past the United States had been ambivalent about NATO's role in security cooperation with the EU. Part of the concern was that many EU

countries who were also in NATO would give more support to a common European security and defense initiative and less support for NATO.

Clinton clarified the U.S. position on European security and defense.

“We do not see the EU as a competitor of NATO, but we see a strong Europe as an essential partner with NATO and with the United States,” Clinton said. “We look forward to working together with the EU as it applies its Common Security and Defense Policy to determine how we can best support one another and the United Nations in addressing security challenges.”

Clinton also told the international group that the United States wants a cooperative NATO-Russia relationship that produces concrete results and also draws NATO and Russia closer. Russia has offered a new European Security Treaty and a new NATO-Russia treaty, but Clinton said the United States does not see the need for new treaties.

“We believe discussions of European security should take place within existing forums for European security such as the [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] and the NATO-Russia Council,” Clinton said.

Clinton acknowledged that there are “real differences” with Russia, but said the forum for talks on areas of disagreement is the NATO-Russia Council. One example she cited was using the council to encourage Russia to honor its commitments on Georgia. Russia and Georgia fought a brief conflict in August 2008 over breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Clinton added that the NATO-Russia Council is also the place where common interests can be advanced, “including the indivisibility of our common security.”

In 2000, most of the world's nations met in Dakar, Senegal, and renewed a pledge to ensure that all children will be in school by 2015. But the latest annual monitoring report from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, finds that while there has been progress, the world is not on track to meet the goal.

According to the report, titled “Reaching the Marginalized,” the good news is that the number of children out of school has dropped: from 105 million in 1999 to 72 million in 2007. The bad news is that, if present trends continue, 56 million children still will not be getting an education in 2015. Most will be in the poorest countries of Africa and South and Southwest Asia.

These children without teachers and books will be the hardest to reach, the report says. That issue is the focus of this year's report. Ensuring all the world's children get at least a primary school education is one of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, first adopted by the world community in 1990 under the label “Education for All.” UNESCO is leading efforts to reach the education goal.

Last year's global financial crisis has led to a 10 percent drop in education spending among sub-Saharan countries in Africa and is threatening the progress that has been achieved, according to

the report. The document says that many governments are doing too little to reach educationally marginalized children in their countries, and rich countries are not providing enough financial support.

There have been some shining successes. Some of the world's poorest countries, including Benin, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal and Zambia, have made large gains in the numbers of children attending school by building new schools, training more teachers and abolishing school fees.

But other countries, including some developing countries with stronger economies, are way behind. The report singles out Turkey and the Philippines for neglecting the education of their minority populations: the Kurds in eastern Turkey and the Muslims of southern Philippines.

Despite substantial international assistance, donor countries are not providing enough to help poor countries, the report says. The report calculates that after expected foreign assistance is taken into account, approximately \$11 billion more will be needed, especially in Africa, to allow all children to attend school. The report calls for convening an emergency donors' conference this year to fill the funding gap.

The United States makes significant contributions to "Education for All." Most American help goes directly to individual countries as bilateral aid. The report calls for greater multilateral coordination of aid, a goal Barack Obama also cited when he was campaigning for the U.S. presidency.

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